



ADVOCATING FOR YOUTH

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Public Management

Video Transcript

[TEXT: YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE
ONLINE TRAINING SERIES]

[TEXT: Advocating for Youth]

[TEXT: Learning Objectives

1. Identify specific challenges facing youth.
2. Strategically target influencers.
3. Launch a campaign that will bring support.]

[TEXT: Omekongo Dibinga, Director, UPstander International]

My name is Omekongo Dibinga, and this is "How to Effectively Advocate for Youth."

There are three objectives for this lesson: identify specific challenges facing youth in your community, strategically target "influencers" who can effect change, and launch a campaign that will bring you the support that you need.

Effectively advocating for youth requires a 100 percent commitment from your team! Too often, youth communities are underserved because there is no one representing their voice.

There are three objectives for this lesson. Step 1: Identify specific challenges facing youth in your community.

One challenge that advocates for youth often face is that they can be too generic with their mission. Leaders may make such comments as: "I want to save the youth of my country" or "I want to get jobs for the youth of my community." Words like this will gain support from no one, especially funders for your potential project. Your team must identify specific challenges facing specific members of your community.

All youth communities are dealing with different challenges and need different solutions. The more specific you are with your language, the more likely you will be to garner support from specific groups. Using language such as "I want to provide teenage orphaned youth with nutritional training so they can support their younger siblings" is a very specific idea. You could target ministries or organizations that can help you deal with that issue. The more specific you get, the better your chances are of finding the right partners to support you.



Step 2: Strategically target influencers who can effect change. Once you know who the people are who can support your specific program, for example, the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Children's Services you must target them. Once you know who the people are that can aid you, learn where they assemble and appear at the meetings with your detailed action plan. If the potential supporters operate in the social media realm, you need to actively engage them online as well.

What will also aid you is building your own community of support so that your potential funders or legislators will see that you have an established network and they will be more willing to support you. Are there religious groups or financial institutions in your community that you know are influential with the government? Can you partner with the group that is the strongest constituency for the legislators you seek to work with? This will help legislators realize that you are not just a party of one, but collective group of concerned, active advocates.

Step 3: Launch your campaign. The ministry, legislators or other stakeholders that you choose to target are extremely busy people. You need to make sure that they hear about your campaign or project from multiple angles. They need to see the name of your project in the newspapers, on television, as well as through active online campaigns. This is why step number 2 is so important. The more attention you can draw to your campaign, the more positive influence will be placed on the people who have the power to make change. If you are successful with publicizing your campaign, you may hear from your potential supporters before you contact them!

Remember, effectively advocating for youth requires commitment, plus research, plus the ability to organize your efforts. The more work and research you do, the easier you will make it for the policymakers who are having their attention pulled in many different directions. You have to do the work for them. Politicians and other government officials want to be engaged in activities that remind their constituents of their commitment to their communities.

Be as specific about your cause as possible. The youth of your country may be among the most marginalized population. They need a strong voice and you, you can amplify their voice with your passion, your leadership and your organizational skills.

Good luck!

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